



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 8, 2016
Contact: Gabrielle Nomura Gainor, 206.676.5559, gabrielle.gainor@seattleopera.org

Aidan Lang unveils new direction for Seattle Opera at Annual Meeting

Brian Marks elected 2016 President of the Board

SEATTLE—Reducing racial and socioeconomic barriers to opera is a top priority for Seattle Opera, announced General Director Aidan Lang at the company’s Annual Meeting on Sept. 6, 2016. Lang aims to serve the diverse communities across the Pacific Northwest through new theatrical approaches in performances, as well as increased educational and engagement arts programming in the community.

“Our recent *Count Ory*, which packed the punch of a Broadway musical with choreography and lively staging, is an example of this more theatrical approach,” Lang said. “We’re focused on bringing incredible stories to life, and ensuring that our work reflects our region in age, gender, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background.”

Lang went on to explain how Seattle Opera at the Center (“SOATC”), a new civic home for opera located adjacent to McCaw Hall, will be crucial to the company’s work. Set for completion in 2018, SOATC will provide much-needed space for classes, workshops, and performances open to the public, as well as space to prepare additional programming that will be offered statewide. Roughly half of the \$60 million project must be raised through private fundraising. To date, the

company has raised more than \$15 million through private donations (\$11.2 in Board contributions).

In addition to laying out Seattle Opera's new guiding principles, the Annual Meeting saw the election of Brian Marks, retired President and CEO of Augusta Sportswear, as President of the Board. Marks has been a Seattle Opera Board Member since 2010. He also serves on the boards of Seattle Symphony and the Augusta Symphony.

"The Board and I are committed to helping Seattle Opera do what it does best: creating transcendent experiences through music, storytelling, and theater," said Marks, whose presidency will focus on creating fiscal sustainability, Board governance, and moving the company into its new civic building on the Mercer Arena site at Seattle Center next to McCaw Hall.

2016/17 Season Sponsor: Seattle Opera Guild In memory of Marian E. Lackovich and Captain Louis J. Lackovich

###

About Seattle Opera

Established in 1963, Seattle Opera is committed to serving the people of the Pacific Northwest with performances of the highest caliber and through innovative educational and engagement programs for all. Each year, more than 95,000 people attend Seattle Opera performances, and more than 400,000 people of all ages are served through school performances, radio broadcasts, and more. By drawing our communities together, and by offering opera's unique fusion of music and drama, we create life-enhancing experiences that speak deeply to people's hearts and minds. Connect with Seattle Opera on Facebook, Twitter, SoundCloud, and through the [Seattle Opera channel on Classical King FM. 98.1.](#)